



North Africa

Recent developments

UNHCR's operations in the region remain focused on the Saharan refugees living in the Tindouf camps in Algeria. The solution to this long-standing refugee situation is inextricably linked to the resolution of the conflict over the Western Sahara territory. Meanwhile, UNHCR has continued to work with WFP, calling for greater resources to enable the provision of protection and humanitarian assistance to refugees. In partnership with the Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG), UNHCR launched a number of Confidence-Building Measures (CBMs) during 2003, aiming to create generally accessible means of communication between separated family members. These included the establishment of a mail system and telephone links between the camps in Algeria and villages in Western Sahara, as well as an exchange of family visits. However, disagreements over the way this should be run led to the suspension of the programme. Following negotiations in the region in October 2003, there is hope that some aspects of the CBM project will start to be implemented soon. The Office is also striving to update the registration of refugees so as to better direct humanitarian assistance.

Algeria
Libyan Arab Jamahiriya
Mauritania
Morocco
Tunisia
Western Sahara Territory



Strategic objectives

The promotion of the institution of asylum and the provision of limited assistance to refugees and asylum-seekers remain UNHCR's main objectives. Over the next twelve months, the Office will continue to advocate the adoption of national refugee legislation, and to emphasise capacity-building. It will strive to find durable solutions in a region where repatriation is rarely feasible, resettlement difficult, and local integration not always achievable. In close co-ordination with DPKO, and in accordance with United Nations Security Council resolutions, UNHCR will actively work with the Moroccan authorities, Saharan refugee leaders and the host country, Algeria, to restart the confidence-building measures. The Office will also consolidate the registration data for camp refugees and continue exploring the potential for raising funds for the programme from NGOs in the region who have shown a renewed interest in funding some of UNHCR's activities.

Operations

In **Algeria**, UNHCR will continue to provide basic humanitarian assistance to Saharan refugees in the Tindouf camps. UNHCR's priority will be to ensure that basic needs are covered in accordance with established standards. Efforts will be made to strengthen protection activities in the camps with a view to gaining increased access to the refugees and enhancing their awareness and understanding of protection concepts.

In the **Libyan Arab Jamahiriya**, the Office will pursue efforts to sign a Memorandum of Understanding with the Government to define a framework within which the two can work. In addition, UNHCR will step up capacity-building activities and encourage Libyan NGOs to contribute to the funding of refugee programmes worldwide.

In **Mauritania, Morocco** and **Tunisia**, UNHCR will provide international protection and direct material assistance to the most vulnerable urban refugees, many of whom originate from sub-Saharan countries, mainly Sierra Leone, Liberia and Central Africa. The Office will also pursue capacity-building activities. The governments of this region, which represents a transit area for migration movements towards Western Europe, will be assisted towards the establishment of national refugee systems. At the same time, UNHCR will draw the governments' attention to the migration/asylum nexus and to the need to address refugee issues in the wider context of migration.

Budget (USD)	
Country	Annual Programme
Algeria	4,450,230
Libyan Arab Jamahiriya	1,119,663
Mauritania	336,868
Morocco	275,308
Tunisia	197,867
Total	6,379,936

Algeria: One of the oldest refugee groups is the Saharan refugees – some of them have been in exile for decades in Dakhla camp, Tindouf region. UNHCR/A. Hollmann



